

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 211500Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2679

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T JIDDA 7076

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, US, SA

SUBJECT: KAGNEW FOUR

REF: A. STATE 245482

B. LONDON 15801

C. STATE 240695

D. ROME 14617

1. ON OCTOBER 20 WE RAISED WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN AFFAIRS AHMED SIRAJ THE QUESTION OF SAUDI ASSISTANCE IN PASSING A PARCEL OF FOODSTUFFS AND MEDECINES TO THE TWO U.S. HOSTAGES FROM ASMARA BELEIVED TO BE BEING HELD SOMEWHERE NEAR THE ERITREAN RED SEA COAST. WE INFORMED HIM THAT THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED TO ASIST IN PASSING A SIMILAR PACKAGE TO TWO HOSTAGES HELD BY THE ELF IN AN AREA NEAR THE SUDANESE BORDER.

2. WE TOLD SIRAJ THAT OUR INFORMATION ON THE LOCATION OF THE TWO PERSONS WE BELIEVED TO BE HELD BY THE PLF WAS SLECHY AND WE WERE NOT IN FACT EVEN CERTAIN THAT THEY WERE BEING HELD BY THE PLF. MOREOVER, WE HAD HAD
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NO DIRECT WORD ON THEIR PHYSICAL CONDITION WHICH WE

SURMISED MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT WEAKENED.

3. SIRAJ SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE MECHANICS OF SUCH A TRANSFER WOULD PRESENT ANY GREAT DIFFICULTY. THE SAG CAN GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PLF. BUT IN DOING SO DID WE JUST WANT TO ASK THE PLF IF THEY WOULD PASS FOOD AND MEDICINE TO THE HOSTAGES; DIDN'T WE HAVE ANY OTHER MESSAGE? WERE WE INTERESTED IN THE KIND OF A MEETING WITH PLF REPS THAT WE HAD INFORMED THE SAG MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN KHARTOUM? SHOULD THE SAG RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A MEETING?

4. WE INFORMED SIRAJ THAT WE THOUGHT THAT THE USG MIGHT APPROVE A SIMILAR MEETING WITH A PLF REPRESENTATIVE IN JIDDA OR SOME OTHER MUTUALLY AGREEABLE PLACE, PROVIDED IT BE UNDERSTOOD IN ADVANCE THAT THE USG REPRESENTATIVE TO SUCH A MEETING WOULD NOT BE AUTHORIZED TO NEGOTIATE OR BARGAIN FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES: USG POLICY IN THIS REGARD IS FIRM. SIRAJ SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE PLF WOULD PUT FORWARD SUCH CONDITIONS AS THE ENDING OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE ABANDONING OF THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT ASMARA. WE REITERATED THAT WE WOULD NEITHER NEGOTIATE RANSOM NOR POLITICAL CONCESSIONS FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. SIRAJ ASKED IF WE WOULD BE WILLING TO LISTEN TO THE PLF DEMANDS. WE REPLIED THAT, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THERE WOULD BE NO BARGAINING, YES, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO LISTEN.

5. SIRAJ ASKED THAT WE SUBMIT OUR REQUEST IN WIRING TO FACILITATE CONSIDERATION BY FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE SAUD AND POSSIBLY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. WITH THE THOUGHT THAT THE SAG MIGHT PASS ON THE THE PLF ANY WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FROM US AS THE SIMPLEST MEANS OF TRANSMITTING OUR REQUEST, WE ENQUIRED WHETHER AN AIDE MEMOIRE SUMMARIZING THE MAIN POINTS OF OUR CONVERSATION WOULD SUFFICE. HE SAID THAT IT WOULD.

6. BY SEPTTEL WE ARE TRANSMITTING TO THE DEPARTMENT THE TEXT OF A PROPOSED AIDE MEMOIRE. IF THE DEPARTMENT
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APPROVES, WE WILL DELIVER THE AIDE MEMOIRE TO SIRAJ AND CONFIRM THAT, IF THE PLF ASKS THE SAG TO SET UP A MEETING WITH A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE A REPRESENTATIVE AVAILABLE.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION.
AKINS

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NNN

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